

FY 2013 STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT (FOA) OVERVIEW INFORMATION

Issued By: US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)

Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 97.083

CFDA Title: Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

Funding Opportunity Announcement Title: Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

Authorizing Authority for Program: SAFER Authority is derived from Section 34 of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended* (15 U.S.C. §2229a *et seq.*)

Appropriation Authority for Program: *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2013* (P.L. 113-6, Division D)

FOA Number: DHS-13-GPD-083-000-99

Key Dates and Time:

Application Start Date:	Monday, July 29, 2013
Application Submission Deadline Date:	Friday, August 30, 2013
Anticipated Funding Selection Date:	N/A
Anticipated Award Date:	No later than September 30, 2014

Other Key Dates: N/A

Intergovernmental Review: Is an intergovernmental review required? ☐ Yes ☒ No

FOA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program Type: Select the applicable program type: ☐ New ☒ Continuing ☐ One-time

Date of origin for Program: November 24, 2003

Funding Opportunity Category: Select the applicable opportunity category:

☒ Discretionary/Competitive ☐ Mandatory/Non-competitive ☐ Both

Application Process: DHS makes all funding opportunities available through the common electronic “storefront” grants.gov, accessible on the Internet at <http://www.grants.gov>. If you experience difficulties accessing information or have any questions, please call the grants.gov customer support hotline at (800) 518-4726.

Components/Directorates must ensure applicants and recipients use the appropriate OMB Standard Forms when applying for financial assistance. Application forms and instructions are available at Grants.gov. To access these materials, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, select “Apply for Grants,” and then select “Download Application Package.” Enter the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) and/or the funding opportunity number located on the cover of this announcement. Select “Download Application Package,” and then follow the prompts to download the application package. To download the instructions, go to “Download Application Package” and select “Instructions.” Applications are accessible via <https://portal.fema.gov>.

Links to the application will be available via the US Fire Administration’s (USFA) Web site <http://www.usfa.fema.gov> and the Grants.gov Web site <http://www.grants.gov>.

For additional details, please see *Section X. Application and Submission Information*.

Eligible Applicants:

The following nonprofit entities are eligible to apply directly to FEMA under this solicitation:

☒ Fire Departments ☒ National, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters

For additional information, please see *Section III. Eligibility Information*.

Type of Funding Instrument: ☒ Grant ☐ Cooperative Agreement ☐ Loan

Cost Share or Match: ☐ Cost Match ☐ Cost Share ☒ None Required

Maintenance of Effort: ☐ Yes ☒ No

Management and Administration: Administrative costs up to three percent of the awarded amount are allowable under the Recruitment and Retention category only.

FULL FOA

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Program Overview and Priorities

FY 2013 SAFER is a competitive/discretionary grant program comprised of two categories:

- **Hiring of Firefighters** (Career, Combination, and Volunteer Fire Departments)
- **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters** (Combination and Volunteer Fire Departments and national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters)

Hiring of Firefighters (Priorities)

- **First priority:** Rehiring laid-off firefighters
- **Second priority:** Retention of firefighters who face imminent layoff or filling positions vacated through attrition but not filled due to economic circumstances
- **Third priority:** Hiring new firefighters

The appropriated funds are to be administered as indicated below. Specific funding parameters are highlighted as the result of a recommendation via the criteria development process (CD) or as required by *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended*:

- 15 percent is set aside for the hiring of new firefighters (CD)
- 10 percent is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 USC § 2229a(a)(2))
 - No more than 33 percent of the total amount allocated for the recruitment and retention of volunteers can be awarded to national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters (CD)
- 10 percent is set aside for grants awarded to volunteer or majority volunteer departments for hiring of firefighters. A majority volunteer fire department is made up of more than 50 percent of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for their services, other than life, health, and worker's compensation insurance, or a nominal stipend payment, including certain paid-on-call personnel. It may be necessary to go out of rank order to select a sufficient number of applications in order to meet the 10 percent requirement. (15 USC § 2229a(a)(1)(H))
- If less than 10 percent of the funds available for the hiring of firefighters are awarded to volunteer and majority volunteer fire departments, the remaining funds must be transferred to

provide grants for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (15 USC § 2229a(a)(1)(H))

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category (Priorities)

- **The highest priority** is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and with staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards 1710 or 1720.

Program Objectives

- **The purpose** of SAFER Grants is to provide funding directly to fire departments and national, state, local, or tribal organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters to assist them in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments.
 - SAFER Grants achieve this purpose by funding: (1) the hiring of new firefighters, (2) the rehiring of firefighters that have been laid off, (3) the retention of firefighters facing imminent layoffs, or (4) the filling of positions that were vacated through attrition. Additionally, SAFER grants fund fire departments and national, state, local, or tribal organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters to assist with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.
- **The goal** of the SAFER Grants is to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities in order to respond to emergencies, and assure that communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

SAFER intends to improve or restore local fire departments' staffing and deployment capabilities so they may more effectively and safely respond to emergencies. With enhanced or restored staffing levels, grantees should see a reduction in response times and an increase in the number of trained personnel assembled at the incident scene.

While not required for a SAFER Grant, it is preferable that the enhanced or restored staffing levels of all SAFER Grantees should ensure all first-arriving apparatus are staffed with a minimum of four qualified personnel (to meet NFPA standards) who are capable of initiating the suppression response. Ultimately, SAFER Grantees should achieve more efficient responses and safer incident scenes thereby ensuring communities have improved protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

The FY 2013 SAFER Grant plays an important role in the implementation of the National Preparedness System by supporting the building, sustainment, and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal (NPG) of a secure and resilient Nation. Delivering core capabilities requires the combined effort of the whole community, rather than the exclusive effort of any single organization or level of government.

The FY 2013 SAFER Grant's allowable costs support efforts to build and sustain core capabilities across the Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery mission areas. Examples of tangible outcomes from FY 2013 SAFER include building and sustaining core capabilities, such as Public and Private Services and Resources, and Public Health and Medical Services.

For additional details, please refer to the *National Preparedness Goal, First Edition, September 2011* at <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/prepared/npg.pdf>.

Criteria Development Process

Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to develop funding priorities for SAFER Grant opportunities. The panel makes recommendations about funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants.

The nine major fire service organizations represented on the panel are:

- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors
- North American Fire Training Directors
- Congressional Fire Service Institute

The content of this SAFER FOA reflects implementation of the criteria development panel's recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards. Based on the recommendations, funding priority is given to applications that effectively address the evaluation elements as outlined.

II. Funding Information

Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions

Available Funding for the FOA:	\$320,920,083
Projected Number of Applications:	2500
Projected Number of Awards:	300
Projected Award Start Date:	November 1, 2013
Projected Award End Date:	September 30, 2014

Period of Performance: 24 months under the Hiring of Firefighters category; up to 48 months for the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category

Period of Performance

Is an extension to the period of performance permitted? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Extensions to the period of performance will be considered only through formal requests to FEMA with specific and compelling justifications why an extension is required. All extension requests must be submitted to FEMA at least 60 days prior to the end of the period of performance and must address:

- Reason for delay
- Current status of the activity/activities
- Approved period of performance termination date and new project completion date
- Remaining available funds
- Budget outlining how remaining funds will be expended
- Plan for completion, including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the position/person responsible for implementing the plan for completion
- Certification that the activity/activities will be completed within the extended period of performance without any modification to the original Statement of Work approved by FEMA
- Potential impacts if FEMA does not approve the extension request or approves the request for a shorter period of time than requested

III. Eligibility Information

Table 1 identifies, in general, eligible entities that can apply for FY 2013 SAFER Funding within each category. For more specific information, also see *IV. Funding Restrictions*.

Table 1: Eligible Entities

Entity	Volunteer Fire Departments	Combination Fire Departments	Career Fire Departments	National, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations
Hiring of Firefighters Category (Hiring/Rehiring of New Firefighters Activity)	✓	✓	✓	
Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category	✓	✓		✓

Ineligible Applicant Types (under this announcement)

- Federal fire departments and fire departments under contract to the Federal Government whose sole responsibility is the suppression of fires on federal installations or lands
- For-profit fire departments and organizations (i.e., fire departments that do not have specific nonprofit status or that are not municipally based)
- Ambulance services, emergency medical service organizations, rescue squads, auxiliaries, dive teams, and urban search and rescue teams
- Non-federal airport or port authority fire departments whose sole responsibility is suppression of fires on the airport grounds or port facilities, unless the airport/port fire department has a formally recognized arrangement with the local jurisdiction to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis outside the confines of the airport or port facilities
- Fire stations that are part of, controlled by, or under the day-to-day operational direction of a larger fire department or agency, or are not independent
- State and local agencies, such as forest service, fire marshals, emergency management offices, hospitals, and training offices
- Career fire departments (under the Recruitment and Retention Category)

Ineligible Applicant Types (under this announcement)

- National, state, local, or tribal organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters, supporting firefighter volunteerism, or otherwise having an interest in volunteer firefighters (under the Hiring of Firefighters Category)

IV. Funding Restrictions

Restrictions on Use of Award Funds

DHS grant funds may only be used for the purpose set forth in the grant and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants/cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

Pre-award costs are not allowable for SAFER Hiring Grants except for grant writer fees under the SAFER Recruitment and Retention Grants.

Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Federal employees may not receive funds under this award.

- **Volunteer Fire Departments and Combination Fire Departments** may apply for funding under both categories (Hiring of Firefighters, Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters). If the applicant wishes to apply for both categories, separate applications must be completed for each category.
 - Applicants are limited to one application for Recruitment and Retention and one application for hiring per application period. If an applicant submits two applications for the same category during a single application period, both applications will be disqualified.
- **Career Fire Departments** may apply for funding only under the Hiring of Firefighters category. Applicants are limited to one application during a single application period. If an applicant submits two applications for the same category during a single application period, both applications will be disqualified.
 - Municipalities and fire districts may submit applications on behalf of fire departments lacking the legal status to do so, such as those under the support of the municipality or district. Each eligible applicant is limited to one application for hiring per application period.
- **National, State, Local, or Tribal Organizations** representing the interests of volunteer firefighters and individual fire departments (volunteer or combination) may apply for funding under Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category.
 - Applicants are limited to one application for recruitment and retention per application period. If an applicant submits two applications for the same category during a single application period, both applications will be disqualified.

For additional details on restricted use of funds, see *Appendix B*.

Hiring of Firefighters Category – Eligible Costs

The only allowable costs under the Hiring of Firefighters Category, for new or rehired firefighters, are salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses).

SAFER Funding will pay for the total salary and benefit costs for each funded position.

Firefighters that are current employees or hired prior to the award date, except under the retention activity, are not eligible.

- Salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under SAFER Funding while they are engaged in training are eligible.
- Overtime costs are not eligible. However, costs for overtime that fire departments routinely pay as a part of the base salary or the firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours in order to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are eligible.
- Only full-time positions will be funded. A full-time position is one position that is funded for at least 2,080 hours per year, i.e., 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. However, recognizing many departments have shifts exceeding a 40-hour workweek, FEMA also will consider funding the job-sharing of a full-time position if the grantee has sufficient justification. A job-share position is a full-time position occupied by more than one person.

Example: A department may hire two part-time staff persons at 28 hours each to fulfill the scheduled work hours of one 56-hour shift position.

Hiring of Firefighters Category – Ineligible Costs

- Pre-application costs, such as grant writer fees, administrative costs, and indirect costs associated with hiring of firefighters
- Costs to train and equip firefighters (However, the salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under the SAFER Funding while they are engaged in training are eligible.)
- Uniforms and physicals

Volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments may hire individuals to fill officer-level positions (e.g., chief, fire inspector, training officer, safety officer). However, as the goal of SAFER Grants is to enhance incident scene safety, all applicants must certify that the primary assignment (more than 50 percent of duties) of all SAFER-funded Firefighters will be an operational assignment (fire suppression) regardless of collateral duties.

Recruitment and Retention Category – Eligible Costs

Applicants must correlate the activities for which funding is being requested and the identified recruitment or retention problems or issues being addressed. Additionally, FEMA will not fund activities if an applicant has not provided sufficient information detailing how an activity being funded will enhance recruitment and retention.

The limited funding available for SAFER activities precludes the award of funding for operational activities, such as the purchase of firefighting equipment and vehicles. Personal protective clothing may be funded for newly recruited firefighters, but personal protective equipment for other types of members or existing members is not eligible.

Applicants who propose to focus on retention of volunteers will receive equal consideration as applicants focusing on recruitment of volunteers. A focus on retention may include providing incentives for volunteer firefighter members to continue service in a fire department. All funded activities under Recruitment and Retention must be governed by formally adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Minimally, these SOPs should specify who qualifies for each of the incentives, specific requirements for earning the incentives, and the disposition of the awarded incentives if an individual fails to fulfill the stipulations.

Examples of initiatives that may receive funding include but are not limited to:

- Nominal stipends for firefighters where the primary duty is an operational assignment (fire suppression) regardless of collateral duties. Departments may want to consult their jurisdiction to understand the full legal/financial implications involved with implementing/sustaining a program. Federal funding should not be used to supplant an existing program.
- Insurance packages such as Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D), disability, health, dental, life
- Reimbursement to members while attending required basic training (e.g., compensation for lost wages, mileage, lodging, per diem)
- Marketing costs to recruit new volunteer members
- Station internet access
- Computers in common areas
- LED/electronic signs (note: 75 percent of usage must be dedicated to Recruitment and Retention activities – additional restrictions apply; see the Environmental Historic Preservation Review section under *Appendix A*)
- Station duty uniforms for new recruits (pants, shirts, hats)
- Non-uniform clothing (t-shirts, jackets, pullovers, etc.) when as part of an award program
- Station modifications (e.g., converting space into bunkroom - restrictions apply; see the Environmental Historic Preservation (EHP) Review section under *Appendix A*)
- Salary and benefit costs for a recruitment and retention coordinator

Recruitment and Retention Category – Eligible Costs

- Physicals (consistent with NFPA 1582) for new recruits only
- Explorer, cadet, and mentoring programs (See *Appendix A, Other Allowable Costs*)
- Staffing needs assessment
- Administrative costs up to three percent of the total awarded amount in accordance with 2 CFR Part 225, Cost Principles for state, local, and tribal governments (OMB Circular A-87) or 2 CFR Part 230, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122), as applicable. Applicants may apply for administrative costs if the costs are directly related to the implementation of the program for which they are applying. Administrative costs are identifiable costs directly associated with the implementation and management of the grant and **cannot exceed three percent of the award**.
- Tuition assistance for higher education (including college tuition and not limited to firefighter training or education) and professional certifications (Note: coursework or certifications in this category should be more advanced than what the department typically funds for required minimum-staffing requirements).
- Books and lab fees for higher education or professional certification (not including computers)
- Costs for training not currently covered under the department's operating budget
- Awards program for participation in operational activities, like operational training and/or responding to incidents (e.g., length of service plaques, gift cards, non-uniform clothing). However, payments may not be retroactive for service prior to the award.
- New Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) (funding of existing programs or retroactive payments are not eligible)
- Mileage reimbursement for operational activities
- Personal protective clothing gear for new recruits after they have successfully passed an NFPA 1582 compliant physical
- Applications for funding in the Recruitment and Retention category could include activities requiring up to four years to complete (with proper justification)
- Indirect costs for national, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations that have a federally approved indirect cost rate agreement

Recruitment and Retention Category – Ineligible Costs

- Salary and benefits for firefighters
- Costs incurred prior to award except for grant writer fees
- Fire suppression equipment/vehicles

Recruitment and Retention Category – Ineligible Costs

- Communication equipment including cell phones, pagers, portable radios, or Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems
- Retroactive payments or recognition for service prior to award
- Cash payments for non-operational activities
- Payments for travel to or participation in leisure activities such as theatre tickets, entertainment tickets, and trips (professional sporting events, etc.)
- Costs associated with award banquets, such as food, refreshments, entertainment, or rental facilities. Reimbursement for actual awards (e.g., plaques, and trophies) is eligible.
- Costs for training currently covered under the department's operating budget, such as tuition or instructor fees for department-mandated, basic-level training
- Services at a member's personal residence (e.g., internet access, plowing of driveways)
- Furniture (except for newly converted bunkrooms), televisions, fixtures, appliances (e.g., refrigerators), entertainment equipment
- "Giveaways" such as pencils, pens, t-shirts, cups, mugs, or balloons, for recruitment events
- Fees for courses and training that are available free of charge on the internet or at a state/local training facilities (e.g., NIMS 100, 700, 800)

V. Application Review and Selection Information

Application Review Information

All complete and eligible applications are evaluated relative to SAFER Grant funding priorities. Answers to activity-specific questions as well as information submitted under the Department Characteristics section of the application will determine an application's standing relative to stated priorities. This initial evaluation assesses how closely each application matches the program's established priorities (see information on the funding priorities in *Appendix A*).

Applications most consistent with the SAFER Grant funding priorities score higher in the automated evaluation. Automated evaluation scores are combined with peer review evaluation scores, with each score representing 50 percent of the total application score.

A panel of at least three Peer Review Panelists performs the second phase of an application's evaluation. These panelists evaluate the application using the Narrative Statement, answers to the general questions, and answers to the activity-specific questions. Each application is judged on its own merits against established criteria and is not compared to other applications.

Panelists will evaluate and score the following criteria:

1. Hiring of Firefighters Category Narrative Elements

The Narrative Statement for applications requesting funding in this category must include Elements A through F. Each element will be evaluated independently by a Peer Review Panelist. The relative weight of the evaluation criteria in the determination of the grant award is listed below.

A. Project Description (30%)

- This statement should describe why the applicant needs the grant funds.
- It should include how the requested firefighters will be used within the department and a description of the specific benefit these firefighters will provide for the fire department and community.
- If the applicant is requesting funding under the Rehiring of Firefighters activity, the narrative should provide details as to when and why the vacancies occurred and how the vacancies have affected the service to the community.
- Applications must discuss how the grant would enhance the department's ability to protect critical infrastructure.

B. Impact on Daily Operations (30%)

- This statement should explain how the community and current firefighters are at risk without the requested firefighters and to what extent that risk will be reduced if the applicant is awarded.
- Applications should discuss the impact the funded positions will have on NFPA compliance.

C. Financial Need (30%)

- This statement should explain the applicant's organizational budget and its inability to address the need without federal assistance, including other actions the applicant has taken to meet their staffing needs.

D. Cost Benefit (10%)

- Applicants should explain any benefits the department or community will realize if the project described is funded (e.g., anticipated savings, efficiencies).

E. Performance (Additional Consideration)

- Applicants should explain their proven record of accomplishment for timely project completion and satisfactory performance of other Assistance to Firefighter Grants (AFG), FP&S, and SAFER Awards.

F. Veterans Preference (Additional Consideration)

- Applicants should explain existing policy to recruit military veterans.

2. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity Narrative Elements – Fire Departments

The Narrative Statement for applications requesting funding in this category must include Elements A through E. Each element will be evaluated independently by a Peer Review Panelist. The relative weight of the evaluation criteria in the determination of the grant award is listed below:

A. Project Description (30%):

- This statement should describe how the applicant will use the grant funds.
- It should include how the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters or retention of current volunteer firefighters will impact the department's identified operational needs or capabilities.
- Applicants should describe the specific benefit these firefighters will provide for the fire department(s) or community.
- It should also identify and describe the department's recruitment or retention problems or issues, and how the requested activities will address those needs.
- Applicants should identify the specific goal of the recruitment and retention plan and how it will be implemented.
- If the grant will have a regional impact, specific information should be included about which activities are part of the regional request and which activities are exclusive to a host applicant, if applicable.

B. Impact on Daily Operations (30%):

- Applicants should describe how the community and current firefighters are at risk without the requested firefighters, and to what extent that risk will be reduced if the applicant is awarded.

C. Financial Need (30%)

- This statement should explain the applicant's organizational budget shortfalls and its inability to address the need without federal assistance, including other actions the applicant has taken to meet their staffing needs.

D. Cost Benefit (10%)

- Applicants should explain any benefits the department or community will realize if the project described is funded (e.g., anticipated savings, efficiencies).

- This statement should explain the high benefit for the costs incurred and if these costs are reasonable.
- This statement should also provide justification for the budget items relating to the cost of the requested items.

E. Performance (Additional Consideration)

- Applicants should explain their proven track record for timely project completion and satisfactory performance in other AFG, FP&S, and SAFER Awards.

3. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity Narrative Elements – National, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighters interest organizations

The Narrative Statement for applications requesting funding in this category must include Elements A through E. Each element will be evaluated independently by a Peer Review Panelist. The relative weight of the evaluation criteria in the determination of the grant award is listed below:

A. Project Description (30%):

- This statement should describe how the applicant will use the grant funds.
- It should include how the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters or retention of current volunteer firefighters will impact the identified operational needs or capabilities of the fire departments participating in the application.
- Applicants should describe the specific benefit these firefighters will provide for the fire department(s) and their respective communities.
- Applicants should identify and describe the department's recruitment or retention problems or issues, and how the requested activities will address those needs.
- Applicants should identify the specific goal of the recruitment and retention plan and how it will be implemented.

B. Impact on Daily Operations (30%):

- This statement should include how the region and/or all the fire departments (participating in this application), communities, and their current firefighters are at risk without the requested firefighters, and to what extent that risk will be reduced if the grant is awarded.

C. Financial Need (30%)

- Applicants should explain their organizational budget shortfalls and their inability to address the need without federal assistance, including other actions the applicant has taken to meet their staffing needs.

D. Cost Benefit (10%)

- This statement should explain any benefits the applicant or their community will realize if the project described is funded (e.g., anticipated savings, efficiencies).
- Applicant should describe if there is a high benefit for the costs incurred and if costs are reasonable.
- Applicants should also provide justification for the budget items relating to the cost of the requested items.

E. Performance (Additional Consideration)

- Applicants should explain their proven track record for timely project completion and satisfactory performance in other AFG, FP&S, and SAFER Awards.

VI. Post-Selection and Pre-Award Guidelines

Notice of Award

All successful applicants for all DHS grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with DHS Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions available within Section 6.1.1 of <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/cfo-financial-management-policy-manual.pdf>.

Upon approval of an application, the award will be made in the form of a grant. The date the approval of award is entered in the system is the “award date.” Notification of award approval is made through the e-Grant system through an automatic e-mail to the grantee point of contact listed in the initial application. Once an award has been approved and recorded in the system, a notice is sent to the authorized grant official. Follow the directions in the notification to accept your award documents. The authorized grant official should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant and to learn more about the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under federal awards.

SAFER will evaluate and act on applications within 90 days following the close of the application period. It is projected that all awards will be made no later than September 30, 2014.

Administrative and Federal Financial Requirements

Grantees are obligated to submit various financial and programmatic reports as a condition of their award acceptance. Please see below for a summary of financial and programmatic reports as required.

Future awards and funds drawdown may be withheld if these reports are delinquent.

1. Federal Financial Reports (SF-425) Required Semi-Annually (For SAFER). Recipients of SAFER Grants awarded on or after October 1, 2009, are required to submit semi-annual Federal Financial Reports (FFR, SF-425). The FFR, to be submitted using the on-line e-Grant system, will be due semi-annually based on the calendar year beginning with the period after the award is made. Grant recipients are required to submit an FFR throughout the entire period of performance of the grant. Reports are due no later than July 30 for the period January 1-June 30 and no later than January 30 for the period July 1-December 31.

2. Grant Closeout Process. Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, grantees must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments throughout the period of performance. After these reports have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, a closeout notice will be completed to close out the grant. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds that will be de-obligated, and address the requirement of maintaining the grant records for three years from the date of the final FFR. The grantee is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down but remain as unspent on grantee financial records.

Program Performance Reporting Requirements

1. SAFER Quarterly (Programmatic) Performance Report. The awardees will be responsible for providing updated obligation and expenditure information on a quarterly basis. The applicant is responsible for completing and submitting a programmatic Performance Report using the e-Grants system. The programmatic Performance Report is due within 30 days of the end of each of the grant's quarters. Quarters are based on the grant's period of performance.

2. Monitoring. Grant recipients will be monitored periodically by FEMA staff, both programmatically and financially, to ensure that the project goals, objectives, performance requirements, timelines, milestone completion, budgets, and other related program criteria are being met.

Monitoring may be accomplished through either a desk-based review or on-site monitoring visits, or both. Monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial, programmatic, performance, compliance and administrative processes, policies, activities, and other attributes of each federal assistance award, and will identify areas where technical assistance, corrective actions, and other support may be needed.

The recipient is responsible for monitoring all sub-award activities to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance. Responsibilities include the accounting of receipts and expenditures, cash management, maintaining of adequate financial records, reporting and refunding expenditures disallowed by audits, monitoring, or other assessments and reviews.

3. Reporting requirements under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) (Public Law 109-282), as amended by Section 6202(a) of the Government Funding Transparency Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-252). As defined by the OMB, all new federal awards of \$25,000 or more as of October 1, 2010, are subject to FFATA reporting requirements. “Federal awards” include not only prime awards for grantees, cooperators, and contractors, but also awards to sub-recipients. More information can be found at <http://www.usaspending.gov/news>.

4. Financial and Compliance Audit Report. Recipients that expend \$500,000 or more of federal funds during their fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with GAO’s Government Auditing Standards, located at <http://www.gao.gov/yellowbook>, and OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations, located at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default. Audit reports are currently due to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse no later than nine months after the end of the recipient’s fiscal year. The state shall require that sub-grantees comply with the audit requirements set forth in OMB Circular A-133. Recipients are responsible for ensuring that sub-recipient audit reports are received and for resolving any audit findings.

The grantee shall give FEMA, the sponsoring agency, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the grant, and the use and management of these funds.

5. Required performance and financial reports for Grant Closeout. Final performance report narrative (within the Closeout module in e-Grants) is due 90 days after the end of the period of performance. The Final SF-425 is due 90 days after the end of the grant period.

VII. DHS FEMA Contact Information

Contact and Resource Information

This section describes several resources that may help applicants in completing a FEMA Grant Application. These points of contact are also available for successful applicants who may require assistance during execution of their award

Financial and Administrative Information

SAFER Help Desk: The SAFER Program staffs a Help Desk throughout the application period. The Help Desk can provide assistance with navigation through the automated application, as well as provide programmatic assistance with respect to questions of eligibility. The Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or via e-mail at firegrants@dhs.gov. The Help Desk hours of operation during the application period are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All times listed are eastern daylight times.

Grant Programs Directorate (GPD): FEMA GPD’s Grant Operations will provide pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance for the grant programs included in this solicitation.

Additional guidance and information can be obtained by contacting the FEMA Call Center at (866) 927-5646 or via e-mail at ASK-GMD@dhs.gov.

FEMA Regional Fire Program Specialists: Each of the FEMA regions has specialists that can assist applicants with the application process. For information on your Regional Specialist, visit <http://www.fema.gov/fire-grant-contact-information>.

- 1. GPD Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (GPD-EHP).** General guidance for GPD grantees and sub-grantees to comply with the EHP review process is provided in the EHP Supplement (URL). The FEMA GPD-EHP Team also provides guidance and information about the EHP review process to grantees and sub-grantees. All inquiries and communications about GPD projects or the EHP review process, including the submittal of EHP review materials, should be sent to gpdehpinfo@fema.gov. EHP Technical Assistance, including the EHP Screening Form, can be found at https://www.rkb.us/ehp_docs.cfm.

Programmatic Information

Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID): CSID is a non-emergency comprehensive management and information resource developed by DHS for grants stakeholders. CSID provides general information on all FEMA grant programs and maintains a comprehensive database containing key personnel contact information at the federal, state, and local levels. CSID can be reached by phone at (800) 368-6498 or by e-mail at ASKCSID@dhs.gov, 9:00 AM – 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All times listed are eastern times.

Systems Information

e-Grant: For technical assistance with the e-Grant system, please contact the AFG Help Desk. The Help Desk can be contacted at (866) 274-0960 or by e-mail at firegrants@dhs.gov.

VIII. Other Critical Information

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation

Prior to allocation of any federal preparedness awards in FY 2013, grantees must ensure and maintain adoption and implementation of NIMS.

Emergency management and incident response activities require carefully managed resources (personnel, teams, facilities, equipment and/or supplies) to meet incident needs. Utilization of the standardized resource management concepts such as typing, inventorying, and cataloging promote a strong national mutual aid capability needed to support delivery of core capabilities. Additional information on resource management and national Tier I NIMS Resource Types can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/resource-management>.

FEMA has developed the NIMS Guideline for Credentialing of Personnel to describe national credentialing standards and to provide written guidance regarding the use of those standards. This guideline describes credentialing and typing processes, and identifies tools which Federal Emergency

Response Officials (FEROs) and emergency managers at all levels of government may use both routinely and to facilitate multijurisdictional coordinated responses.

Although state, local, tribal, and private sector partners—including nongovernmental organizations—are not required to credential their personnel in accordance with these guidelines, FEMA strongly encourages them to do so in order to leverage the federal investment in the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 201 infrastructure and to facilitate interoperability for personnel deployed outside their home jurisdiction. Additional information can be found at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_alert_cred_guideline.pdf

IX. How to Apply

Application Instructions

Applications under the FY 2013 SAFER will be accessible at <https://portal.fema.gov>. The application will also be linked via the US Fire Administration's (USFA) Web site <http://www.usfa.fema.gov> and the grants.gov Web site <http://www.grants.gov>.

The automated e-Grant application was designed with many built-in help screens and drop-down menus to assist with the application process.

The AFG on-line application system ONLY supports Internet Explorer (IE) browsers (IE 6 or higher).

- Do not use any other browsers than IE when entering your information.
- Do not have multiple browsers ("windows") open when entering your information, even if you are using IE.

There are several known problems entering application information using non-IE browsers, or having multiple browsers open, including but not limited to:

- System failure to recognize correct information
- System failure to capture and retain correct information
- System functions like "cut and paste" being disabled
- System resources like Help screens or drop down menus being unavailable

There is no appeal process for inaccurate or incomplete information retained by the system due to improper or multiple browser usage by the applicant. Prior to submission and up to the application deadline, the on-line application can be saved, retrieved, and edited as required.

Applicant tools and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be posted on the AFG Web site <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>.

IMPORTANT: Once you have submitted your application, you cannot change it. You will not be allowed to update your application for any reason(s). Your primary point-of-contact will automatically be notified via e-mail once your application is received.

X. Application and Submission Information

NOTE: Application information **must** match your organization's SAM.gov profile.

- Is your SAM Profile marked PRIVATE? If so, FEMA Grants Management Specialists will not be able to verify your active SAM registration. We recommend that you mark your SAM profile PUBLIC. Sensitive banking and financial data are not revealed in the public profile.
- Application via e-Grants system: Eligible applicants apply for SAFER Funding on-line via the e-Grants application at <https://portal.fema.gov>. The system will allow an authorized representative to login and create a username and password.
- User Name/Password: If you have submitted any Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG, SAFER, FP&S, SCG) applications in a previous grant cycle, then you must continue to use the same username, password, and DUNS number for every FY2013 application.
- FY2013 SAFER: On-line applications can only be submitted at <https://portal.fema.gov>.
- Applications will be processed via <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants> (click prompt to access e-Grant application).
- Only applications submitted via the on-line, automated grant application system will receive an email confirmation. Applicants should print a copy of the confirmation for their records upon receiving verification that their application has been successfully submitted. Incomplete applications or applications submitted via any other electronic means, including e-mail or fax, will be considered ineligible.
- To be considered eligible for funding, all applications must be completed and submitted electronically by 5:00 p.m. (EDT) on August 30, 2013.

1. Content and Form of Application

1. Application via e-Grants system: Eligible applicants apply for SAFER Funding on-line via the e-Grants application at <https://portal.fema.gov>. The system will allow an authorized representative to login and create a username and password.

If you have submitted any Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG, SAFER, FP&S, SCG) applications in a previous grant cycle, then you must continue to use the same username and password for every FY2013 application(s). Eligible applicants apply for SAFER Funding on-line via the e-Grants application at <https://portal.fema.gov>. The system will allow an authorized representative to login and

create a username and password. If your organization is submitting more than one FY 2013 application, you must use the same username and password used for prior year applications, as well as for each FY 2013 application.

Applicants will have to completely fill out the following forms as part of the on-line e-Grants application:

- Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Standard Form 424A, Budget Information (Non-construction)
- Standard Form 424B, Standard Assurances (Non-construction)
- Standard Form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if the grantee has engaged or intends to engage in lobbying activities)
- FEMA Form 20-16C, Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements, available at <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=2628>

The program title listed in the CFDA is “*Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)*.” The CFDA number is **97.083**.

2. Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number: The applicant must provide a DUNS number with their application. This number is a required field within <http://www.grants.gov> and for System for Award Management (SAM) (see below). Organizations should verify that they have a DUNS number, or take the steps necessary to obtain one as soon as possible. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711.

3. Valid Registration in System for Award Management (SAM), which replaced the Central Contractor Registration (CCR): The application process also involves an updated and current SAM registration by the applicant at <http://www.sam.gov>. Please ensure that your organization’s name, address, DUNS number, and Employee Identification Number (EIN) are up to date in SAM and that the DUNS number used in SAM is the same one used to apply for all FEMA awards. Future payments will be contingent on the information provided in SAM; therefore it is imperative that the information is correct.

Former CCR Registrants

If you had an active record in CCR, you have an active record in SAM. You do not need to do anything in SAM at this time, unless a change in your business circumstances requires a change in SAM in order for you to be paid or to receive an award. Also, banking information, EIN, organization/entity name, address, and DUNS number provided in your AFG application must match the information that you provided in SAM.gov. SAM will send notifications to the registered user via email 60, 30, and 15 days prior to expiration of the record. You can search for registered entities in SAM by typing the DUNS number or business name into the search box.

A valid SAM Registration is a requirement to apply for a grant; but if awarded, no funds may be drawn down until a valid registration has been obtained. Per 2 CFR Part 25, all grant applicants must have an active current SAM registration status at the time of application and throughout the duration of any federal award.

The AFG application process also involves an updated and current registration by the applicant, which must be confirmed at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

4. Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) and/or Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) Number available for this Announcement is: (800) 462-7585: The automated application is designed with help screens and drop-down lists to assist the applicant throughout the process. Applicants can save and retrieve their work and for updates and revisions through the end of the application period; however, after an application has been completed and submitted, no changes can be made.

The automated system does not allow an applicant to submit an incomplete application. The system alerts the applicant when required information has not been entered. By submitting an application on-line, the applicant will automatically receive an email confirmation that the application was successfully submitted.

The on-line system will allow a single authorized representative of an eligible organization to log on and create a user name and password. The selection of the authorized representative is at the discretion of each applicant. Applicants should record their user name and password for future access to their application.

5. Hiring a Grant Writer (Recruitment and Retention Only): Applicants are allowed to hire a grant writer to assist in the application process. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the information contained in their submitted application is a true and accurate reflection of their organization and represents the scope of work being proposed. A copy of the cancelled check and bank statement should be provided upon request.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review all work produced by grant writers, or other third parties on their behalf, prior to submission of their application. Applications that falsely represent their organization or the proposal in any manner will have their application be considered ineligible by the Program Office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action, as appropriate

Appendix A

APPLICATION AND REVIEW INFORMATION

What's New – Fact Sheet

Available Funding

Appropriated Amount - \$320,920,083

New Tools

Updated Get Ready Guide – A handy guide to give you a jump start in prepping your grant application to better prepare you for thoroughly answering the application questions is available at <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>.

Funding Opportunity Announcement and Application Kit

- **Appendix A – Application and Review Information**

- Part I.** Funding Opportunity Description

- Program priorities are listed as High, **H**, Medium **M**, or Low **L**.

- Within each identified program priority (H, M, L), all the proposed activities have an equal value.

- Part II.** Award Information

- Part III.** Eligibility Information

- Part IV.** Application and Submission Information

- Part V.** SAFER Definitions

- **Appendix B – Award Administration**

- Part I.** Award Administration

- Part II.** FEMA Contacts

- Part III.** Other Information

Additional Overview Information – Key Changes

- The content of this FOA reflects the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary and FEMA's implementation of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, (codified, as amended, at 15 USC §2229a et seq.). Under authorities provided under the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended, the following requirements are being waived for the FY 2013 SAFER Grants Program—
 - **Salary limits:** There are no annual salary limits.
 - **Supplanting requirement:** Grants may be used for the purpose of retaining firefighters currently employed who are facing imminent lay-offs or rehiring laid-off firefighters. If applying to retain firefighters facing lay-offs, applicants will answer questions within the on-line application as if these positions had already been laid off.
 - **Period of performance:** For Hiring of Firefighters Category Grants, the period of performance has been reduced to two years.
 - **Attrition of firefighters during the period of performance:** At the time of award, grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters category must submit a current (pre-SAFER) roster listing paid operational/firefighting personnel in support of NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720, who are in full-time or job share positions. The program office will work with a grantee to establish the correct staffing maintenance number which combines the number of pre-SAFER and SAFER Hires. Once this is established, grantees must agree to maintain this number throughout the two year period of performance by taking active and timely steps to fill any vacancies.

Grantees who are unable (due to documentable economic hardship) to backfill firefighting positions that were vacated through attrition (e.g., resignation, retirement) may petition FEMA for a waiver of staffing maintenance requirements. An approved waiver allows a grantee to decrease and reestablish the staffing maintenance number agreed to at the time of award by the number of positions that a grantee is unable to fill. In order to qualify for this waiver, the economic hardship must affect the entire public safety sector in a grantee's jurisdiction, not only the fire department. **Waivers will not be granted for SAFER-funded Positions. Grantees who fail to maintain this level of staffing risk losing the federal funds awarded under this grant.**
- National, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations are eligible applicants under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category.
- National, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations may be reimbursed for indirect costs if they have an indirect cost rate proposal that has been approved by FEMA or their cognizant federal agency.
- There are separate evaluation criteria for national, state, local, or tribal volunteer firefighter interest organizations and fire departments applying under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters category.
 - **CCR to SAM:** Central Contractor Registration (CCR) has been replaced by the System for Award Management (SAM). The System for Award Management (SAM) is a free Web site which consolidates federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. Currently CCR, FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS have been migrated into SAM.

- Please visit the SAM Web site at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. SAM registration is required to receive a SAFER Award. For details, see Part X. Application and Submission Information.

FORMER CCR REGISTRANTS

If you had an active record in CCR, you have an active record in SAM. You do not need to do anything in SAM at this time, unless a change in your business circumstances requires a change in SAM in order for you to be paid or to receive an award. Also, banking information, Employee Identification Number (EIN), organization/entity name, address, and DUNS number provided in your AFG application must match the information that you provided in SAM.gov. SAM will send notifications to the registered user via email 60, 30, and 15 days prior to expiration of the record. You can search for registered entities in SAM by typing the DUNS number or business name into the search box.

Key Dates and Time:

Application Start Date: July 29, 2013 (8:00 a.m. EDT)

Application Submission Date: August 30, 2013 (5:00 p.m. EDT)

Help FEMA Prevent Fraud, Waste and Abuse

If you have information about instances of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement involving FEMA programs or operations, you should contact the DHS OIG Hotline at (800) 323-8603; by fax at (202) 254-4297; or e-mail DHSOIGHOTLINE@dhs.gov.

Part I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Introduction

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate implements and administers the SAFER Grants.

SAFER Grants provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations in order to help them increase the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities.

FY 2013 SAFER is a competitive/discretionary grant program comprised of two categories:

- **Hiring of Firefighters** (Career, Combination, and Volunteer Fire Departments)
- **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters** (Combination and Volunteer Fire Departments and national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters)

SAFER Goal

Assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities in order to respond to emergencies, assuring communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

Maintenance of Staffing Requirement

For Hiring of Firefighters Category Grants, FY 2013 grantees who are unable to hire firefighters to fill positions that were vacated due to documentable economic hardship may petition FEMA for a waiver of staffing maintenance requirements. An approved waiver allows a grantee to decrease and reestablish the staffing maintenance number agreed to at the time of award by the number of positions that a grantee is unable to fill. In order to qualify for a waiver, the economic hardship must affect the entire public safety sector in your jurisdiction, and not only the fire department. Waivers will not be granted for SAFER-funded positions.

Period of Performance

For Hiring of Firefighters Category Grants, the period of performance is two years.

Salary Cap Waiver

There are no annual salary limits.

Retention of Firefighters

For Hiring of Firefighters Category Grants, applicants may apply to retain firefighters who have been issued a formal layoff notice, which includes a specific date for the layoff action, prior to the start of the application period, and those who face imminent layoff – within 120 days of the close of the application period.

Layoffs

For Hiring of Firefighters Category Grants, SAFER Grantees that lay off any firefighters during the SAFER Grant's period of performance will be considered in default of their award and the grant will be terminated.

1. Hiring of Firefighters Category

The highest priority in the Hiring of Firefighters Category is for departments seeking to rehire firefighters who have been laid off.

Hierarchy of Priorities

- **First priority:** Rehiring laid-off firefighters
- **Second priority:** Retention of firefighters who face imminent layoff or filling positions vacated through attrition but not filled due to economic circumstances
- **Third priority:** Hiring new firefighters

a. Rehiring of Firefighters Activity

There are three subcategories under the Rehiring of Firefighters Activity:

- Rehiring of laid-off firefighters
- Retention of firefighters facing possible layoffs
- Filling of positions vacated through attrition

These grants are awarded directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to enable restoration of staffing levels to attain a more effective level of response and a safer incident scene.

Please note the following conditions under the Rehiring of Firefighters Activity:

- Funding provides fire departments with money to pay the salaries and benefits (exclusive of overtime) for grants awarded under the rehiring, retention, and attrition subcategories.
- Grantees must maintain operational staffing at the level that existed at the time of award as well as the SAFER-funded staffing for the two-year SAFER Grant Period of Performance
- Laying off firefighters during the two-year grant period of performance will result in termination of the grant award.
- Only firefighters hired or rehired after the SAFER Grant Award date, except if applying under the Retention subcategory, are eligible for grant funding.

Rehiring

- Eligible positions for funding under the Rehiring of Laid-Off Firefighters activity must have been the object of a layoff between January 1, 2008, and the application deadline (**August 30, 2013**).

Retention

- Firefighters who have been issued a formal layoff notice, which includes a specific date for the layoff action, prior to the start of the application period, and those who face imminent layoff – within 120 days of the close of the application period – will be eligible for SAFER Funding under the Retention subcategory.
- The application period closes on August 30, 2013. The layoffs must become effective on or before December 28, 2013.
- Note: Any layoff action not executed in accordance with the terms of the official layoff notice or which does not meet the above requirements may not qualify for funding in the rehiring of laid-off firefighters or retention categories. **Applicants that do not meet these parameters must apply under the Attrition subcategory or Hiring New Firefighters Activity.**

Attrition

- Eligible vacancies for funding under the Attrition subcategory must have occurred between January 1, 2008, and the start of the application period.

b. Hiring of New Firefighters Activity

New Hire

- FEMA has set aside 15 percent of the FY 2013 appropriation for hiring new firefighters.
- Grants for hiring new firefighters are awarded directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters.

- Funding provides fire departments with money to pay the salaries and benefits of newly hired firefighters (exclusive of overtime).
- Grantees must maintain operational staffing at the level that existed at the time of award as well as the SAFER-funded Staffing for the two-year SAFER Grant Period of Performance.
- Laying off firefighters during the grant period of performance will result in termination of the grant award.
- Only firefighters hired after the SAFER Grant Award date are considered new hires and eligible for grant funding.

c. Meeting National Standards

It is a FEMA priority to bring non-compliant (NFPA 1710 or 1720) departments back into compliance in the most cost-effective manner.

Applicants will be asked general questions about the NFPA standard they are attempting to meet as well as their current ability to meet that standard (without including the use of overtime). Applicants will also be asked to indicate what their ability will be to meet that same standard if awarded grant funds.

Having additional firefighters on staff should improve a local fire department's ability to comply with the staffing, response, and operational standards that enhance community and firefighter safety.

Applications resulting in the largest percentage increases in compliance with the relevant section of NFPA 1710 (for career departments) or 1720 (for volunteer departments) receive higher consideration than applications resulting in smaller percentage increases in compliance.

Note: SAFER Grants focus only on the Deployment or Staffing and Deployment sections of these two standards, respectively.

NFPA 1710 Assembly Requirements: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department (*Section 5.2.4.2 – Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability*)

This standard applies primarily to all-career fire departments and combination departments if the combination department chooses it.

NFPA 1720 Assembly Requirements: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments (*Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment*)

This standard applies primarily to all-volunteer fire departments, but it may also apply to combination departments if the combination department does not choose to comply with the NFPA 1710 standard. The tables below identify the priority levels for current and new compliance with the NFPA 1710/1720 standard.

Current 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities

H Never or 0%	M Half the time or 40-59%
H Rarely or 1-19%	L Very often or 60-79%
M Sometimes or 20-39%	L Most of the time or 80-99%

New 1710/1720 Compliance Priorities

H Always or 100%	M Half the time or 40-59%
H Most of the time or 80-90%	L Sometimes or 20-39%
M Very often or 60-79%	L Rarely or 1-19%

Need More Information?

For more information about these two standards, visit <http://www.nfpa.org>.

For more information on the standards, contact NFPA at (800) 344-3555 or e-mail questions to stds_admin@nfpa.org.

d. Call Volume and Population Served

Department call volume and population served are both factors in the initial application evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents and departments who protect larger numbers of people will receive higher consideration than those departments responding to fewer incidents and protecting smaller jurisdictions.

e. Firefighter Health Measures

The health and wellbeing of firefighters is of paramount importance. Therefore, applicants who indicate newly recruited firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify these benefits will be provided. To qualify for this higher consideration, the physicals must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1582 Chapter 6, Medical Evaluations of Candidates 6.1 and Chapter 9, Essential Job Tasks — Specific Evaluation of Medical Conditions in Members.

Entry-Level Medical Exams

H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

M Non-NFPA-compliant physicals

Annual Medical Exams

H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

M Non-NFPA-compliant physicals

f. Automatic and Mutual Aid

Automatic and Mutual Aid

H Fire departments that have formal automatic and/or mutual aid agreements, and applicants that based requests on a staffing needs assessment, also receive higher consideration.

g. Training Requirements

Minimum Emergency Medical Services (EMS) certification

H Applicants will receive higher consideration if the personnel funded under the grant will meet the minimum EMS certification requirements prescribed by the locality or state having jurisdiction.

2. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category – Fire Departments

The purpose of these grants is to assist fire departments with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response.

The grants are intended to create a net increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies within the grantee's response area.

a. Meeting Staffing Standards

The goal under this SAFER Category is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover and have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 (for details, see c. Meeting National Standards under 1. Hiring of Firefighters Activity).

Departments who currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates are given a higher consideration for funding.

b. Volunteer Membership

Departments or organizations with the highest percentage of volunteers should benefit the most from the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Therefore, applicants whose membership is comprised of mostly volunteer members, or have a significant number of volunteer firefighters, receive higher consideration.

Percentage of Volunteers	
H 91-100%	M 41-50%
H 81-91%	M 31-40%
H 71-80%	L 21-30%
H 61-70%	L 11-20%
M 51-60%	L 1-10%

c. Recruitment/Retention Plan

It is critical to have a plan for recruitment and/or retention activities. Applications requesting funding for recruitment and/or retention programs should be based on formal plans. Applicants must summarize the departments' recruitment and retention plans in the Narrative Statement and explain how the projects/activities will fulfill the plans and meet organizational goals.

R&R Priorities	
H Organizations that perform a periodic evaluation of the program's impact	H Requests from organizations that have a coordinator and marketing plan
H Organizations that request funding for a coordinator's position and marketing plan	

d. Call Volume and Population Served

Department call volume and population served are both factors in the initial evaluation. Departments responding to a higher number of incidents and departments who protect a larger population receive higher consideration.

e. Firefighter Health Measures

Applicants who indicate the newly recruited firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations, who indicate they will provide annual medical exams, and who provide worker's compensation/Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) benefits to their members receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify these benefits will be provided.

An application may include a request for physicals or annual medical exams. In order to receive the grant, funding for the physicals and medical exams must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1582, Chapter 6, Medical Evaluations of Candidates 6.1 and Chapter 9, Essential Job Tasks — Specific Evaluation of Medical Conditions in Members.

Entry-Level Medical Exams

H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

M Non-NFPA-compliant physicals

Annual Medical Exam

H NFPA 1582-compliant physicals

M Non-NFPA-compliant physicals

Worker's Compensation/Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D)

H Applicants who currently provide worker's compensation/accidental death and dismemberment insurance receive a higher competitive rating.

M Applicants who plan to supply worker's compensation/accidental death and dismemberment insurance with grant funds receive a more competitive rating.

f. Training Requirements

Timeliness of Training

H Applicants will receive higher consideration if they will train the newly recruited firefighters to meet the minimum fire and EMS certification requirements prescribed by the locality or state within 24 months of appointment to the department.

Training and Certification	
H FF II/EMT	M FF I
H FF II	L First Responder
M FF I/EMT	

g. Regional Requests

Requests for recruitment or retention that have a regional impact (i.e., an impact beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant's first-due area) will receive higher consideration.

An eligible applicant, which can include a fire department, may act as a "host applicant" and apply for support of both a regional initiative and its own department's internal needs on one application.

A regional host must include a list of all the participating organizations benefitting from a proposed regional project, and provide clear and detailed information on which activities are regional specific versus those that are host specific.

In order to apply for a regional project, the host fire department must agree, if awarded, to be responsible for all aspects of the grant. This includes, but is not limited to, accountability for the assets and all reporting requirements. SAFER strongly recommends all fire departments involved work together prior to award to achieve consensus on programmatic and financial processes and roles and responsibilities. In the regional application, the host fire department will be required to describe the characteristics of the entire region that will be affected by the project as outlined in *Appendix A, Part IV*.

In completing the Request Details and Narrative Statement sections of the application, the applicant must include a list of participating third-party organizations that will benefit from the regional project if the project is approved. In completing the Department Characteristics section of the application, the regional applicant must include data that approximates the characteristics of all fire departments affected by the grant. The third-party organizations that will benefit from the recruitment and retention project may also apply for funding under SAFER as long as the third-party organizations do not apply for a project that could conflict with or duplicate the host applicant's project.

Note: Only applications submitted under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighter Category qualify for regional project requests. The Hiring of Firefighters Category is not eligible as a regional project.

3. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category – National, State, Local, or Tribal Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations

The purpose of these grants is to assist national, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response.

The grants are intended to create an aggregate increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies on behalf of the fire departments being represented. In completing the Request Details and Narrative Statement sections of the application, the applicant must include data that approximates the characteristics of the entire region and/or all fire departments affected by the grant as outlined in *Appendix A, Part IV. If awarded*, grantees may be required to provide documentation of each fire department's consent to participate in the application.

a. Meeting Staffing Standards

The goal under this SAFER Category is to assist departments experiencing a high rate of turnover that have staffing levels significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 (For details, see c. Meeting National Standards under 1. Hiring of Firefighters Grants earlier in this document).

Organizations that currently have the lowest recruitment and retention rates among the entire **region** and/or **all fire departments** benefiting from the grant funds are given a higher consideration for funding.

b. Volunteer Membership

Organizations with the highest percentage of volunteers should benefit the most from the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Therefore, applicants whose membership is comprised of mostly volunteer members, or have a significant number of volunteer firefighters, receive higher consideration.

Percentage of Volunteers	
H 91-100%	M 41-50%
H 81-91%	M 31-40%
H 71-80%	L 21-30%
H 61-70%	L 11-20%
M 51-60%	L 1-10%

c. Recruitment/Retention Plan

It is critical to have a plan for recruitment and retention activities. Applications requesting funding for recruitment or retention programs should be based on formal plans. Applicants must summarize the organization's recruitment and retention plans in the Narrative Statement and explain how the projects/activities applied will fulfill the plans and meet organizational goals.

R&R Priorities	
H Organizations that perform a periodic evaluation of the program's impact	H Requests from organizations that have a marketing plan
H Organizations that request funding for a coordinator's position	

d. Population Served

The combined organizations' population served is a factor in the initial evaluation. Organizations who represent fire departments protecting larger combined numbers of people will receive higher consideration.

Part II - AWARD INFORMATION

This section summarizes the award period of performance and the total amount of funding available under the FY 2013 SAFER Grants. It also describes the basic method used to determine final grant awards and identifies all eligible applicants for funding.

Hiring of Firefighters Category

For all grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters category for both hiring new firefighters or for rehiring firefighters, a default 90-day recruitment period begins when the application is approved for award.

The two year period of performance automatically starts after the 90-day recruitment period, regardless of whether the grantee has successfully hired the requested firefighters.

If a grantee is able to rehire or hire their SAFER-funded Firefighters during the 90-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. For grantees awarded under the Retention category, the period of performance can begin immediately. However, in both cases, grantees must submit an amendment requesting that the period of performance start before the end of the 90-day recruitment period. The period of performance cannot be started later than 90 days after the recruitment period.

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category

Funding may be provided for a four-year period of performance. There is a 90-day recruitment period, which begins when the application is approved for award. The recruitment period allows each grantee time to finalize contracts before the start of the period of performance in order to maximize the availability of the funding. Grantees can seek reimbursement for grant-related costs incurred during the recruitment period as long as these costs are in the approved budget and scope of work.

Grantees should be aware if costs incurred during the recruitment period are charged to the grant, this will reduce the overall amount of funds available and budgeted during the period of performance. Payment for these costs may be requested when the period of performance begins. However, if a grantee is able to begin their recruitment or retention activities during the 90-day recruitment period, the period of performance may begin at that time. However grantees must submit an amendment requesting that the period of performance start before the end of the 90-day recruitment period. The period of performance cannot be started later than 90 days after the recruitment period.

Part III - ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Cost Sharing

There is no prescribed cost share for the SAFER Grantees receiving awards from the FY 2013 appropriations.

B. Other Allowable Costs

In order to help alleviate the financial burden of start-up costs, FEMA will allow Recruitment and Retention Grantees to charge the SAFER Grant for the costs for physicals and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for newly recruited members.

Funds are available to acquire primarily OSHA-required and NFPA-compliant PPE for firefighting personnel. Only actual costs are allowed and will be paid on a reimbursable basis. However, the allowable costs may be limited to reasonable amounts, as determined by FEMA.

Grantees are required to provide documentation to support the purchase of the personal protective clothing gear (proof that the firefighter(s) have undergone an NFPA 1582 compliant physical and are certified as “fit for duty”). Equipment requested must meet all current mandatory requirements, as well as any national or state standards and increase firefighter safety. **The following charts contain information on the eligibility of PPE. Copies of NFPA standards may be reviewed at (<http://www.NFPA.org>).**

Eligible Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Expenditures

- One set of PPE for structural **or** wildland firefighting (including SCBA mask/face piece, boots, pants, coats, gloves, hoods, goggles, helmets, coveralls, and fire shelters)
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-approved retro-reflective highway apparel

Ineligible PPE Expenditures

- Three-quarter length rubber boots
- Self-Contained breathing Apparatus (SCBAs) (not including SCBA masks/face pieces)
- Spare cylinders and individual face pieces
- Bomb disposal suits
- PPE for hazardous materials and other specialized incidents
- More than one set of PPE per member

Training on Use of Requested Equipment

Applicants must indicate that the grant-purchased PPE will be utilized by adequately trained staff or request appropriate training for the requested items. Failure to meet this requirement may result in ineligibility for PPE funding.

Physicals

Grantees may request funds for costs incurred for providing the new recruits with physicals. All grant-funded physicals must meet NFPA 1582 standards (Chapter 6, Medical Evaluations of Candidates 6.1 and Chapter 9, Essential Job Tasks — Specific Evaluation of Medical Conditions in Members).

Remodeling/Renovations of Existing Facilities

The remodeling/renovations to an existing facility are only allowable under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category. The renovations must be minor interior alterations not to exceed \$10,000 (**total per grant award**).

Eligible applicants must provide a cost breakdown in the Request Details section. The costs must be justified in the Narrative Statement section as well.

Remodeling/renovations may not change the footprint or profile of the building. Any request for modifications to facilities may require Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) review. See below for more information on EHP.

Explorer/Cadet Programs

Eligible items under these programs include but are not limited to the following:

- Uniforms, boots, gloves, jackets
- Training (Non-Immediate Danger to Life and Health or IDLH)
- Turnout Gear (not to be used in an IDLH atmosphere)
- Insurance
- Coordinator's position
- Workers compensation insurance
- Transportation costs
- Medical exams

Items that are NOT eligible under Explorer/Cadet Programs include the following:

Explorer/Cadet Programs

- SCBA
- Anything involving the IDLH atmosphere
- Vehicles
- Warning lights for private vehicles
- Any activities precluded by the authority having jurisdiction
- Radios, cell phones, or pagers

Environmental Historic Preservation (EHP) Review

- Project construction using SAFER Funds may not exceed \$10,000.
- Written approval must be provided by FEMA prior to the use of any SAFER Funds for construction or renovation. If awarded funds for construction, grantees may be required to submit evidence of approved zoning ordinances, architectural plans, any other locally required planning permits, and a notice of interest.
- Grantees are encouraged to have completed as many steps as possible for a successful EHP review in support of their proposal for funding (e.g., coordination with their State Historic Preservation Office to identify potential historic preservation issues and to discuss the potential for project effects; compliance with all state and EHP laws and requirements). Projects for which the grantee believes an Environmental Assessment (EA) may be needed, as defined in 44 CFR §§ 10.8 and 10.9, must also be identified to the FEMA Fire Program Specialist within six (6) months of the award.
- SAFER Grantees using funds for construction projects must comply with the *Davis-Bacon Act* (40 USC 3141 *et seq.*). Grant recipients must ensure that their contractors or subcontractors for construction projects pay workers employed directly at the work-site no less than the prevailing wages and fringe benefits paid on projects of a similar character. Additional information, including Department of Labor wage determinations, is available from the following Web site <http://www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-dbra.htm>.

C. Other Funding Restrictions

FEMA Grant Funds may be used only for the purpose outlined in the grant and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award.

Grant Fund Restrictions

Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other federal grants/cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings.

In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity. Failure to adhere to the award conditions will cause the grantee to be considered in default of the grant agreement, and may require the return of all federal funds disbursed under the grant.

With the exception of grant writer fees for SAFER Recruitment and Retention Grants, pre-award costs are not allowable for SAFER Grants.

Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Federal employees may not receive funds under this award.

D. Reasonableness of Requests

The Peer Review Panelists consider all budgeted expenses as part of the cost-benefit determination and may recommend appropriate adjustments. Regardless of the eligibility of any costs requested or the panelists' determination, FEMA reserves the right to reduce any requests for funding, in whole or in part, that it deems excessive or otherwise contrary to the best interests of the program.

Part IV - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Program Narrative

In the application, fire departments applying for SAFER Grants will be asked general questions about their organization and community, as well as questions specific to the proposed project. National, state, local, or tribal organizations that represent the interests of volunteer firefighters will be asked a number of general questions regarding their organizations and a series of activity-specific questions relative to the Recruitment and Retention Projects they propose and the activities selected. The activity-specific questions allow FEMA to understand the nature of the request and to evaluate how closely the request adheres to the established priorities.

Applicants will also be required to provide a written Narrative Statement describing the planned project. The Narrative Statement of the application must provide specific details of the activity for which applicants are seeking funding, including budget details. Applicants must be sure each of the requested activities (each line item in the Request Details section of the application) is fully described in the Project Description portion of the Narrative Statement. Each element must provide information regarding how the proposed activity is related to the applicant's Hiring and Recruitment and Retention Program.

In applications for recruitment and retention, the applicants must also provide details regarding how volunteers will qualify for the incentives (who is eligible for initiatives funded under the grant and discuss any prerequisites). For example, an organization might withhold paying nominal stipends until members participate in a minimum number of operational activities.

Applicants should save their work often as the electronic application includes a time-out feature. If no-save activity is detected for a period of time, the application will time-out and all information that is not saved could be lost. Therefore, it is recommended that applicants type the Narrative Statement information off-line using either a word processing program, such as MS Word, Word Perfect, Notepad, etc., to avoid losing any information.

Once the Narrative Statement is complete, applicants can then cut-and-paste the text into the appropriate sections within the Narrative section of the application. Please note the Narrative Statement block does not allow for formatting. Do not type your narrative using only capital letters. Additionally, do not include tables, special fonts (quote marks, bullets, etc.), or graphs.

Space for the Narrative Statement is limited. Once you save the Narrative Statement to the application, log-out and then log back in to the application to verify that the information was successfully saved.

B. Funding Restrictions

Please see *Section III. Eligibility Information* for a list of funding restrictions.

Part V - SAFER GRANTS DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the SAFER Grants, the following definitions apply.

Automatic-aid: An agreement whereby fire departments are dispatched simultaneously on the initial alarm or where fire departments participate in closest-unit response dispatching.

Benefits: Includes regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, such as vacation leave, sick leave, military leave, etc.

These costs are absorbed by all organization activities in proportion to the relative amount of time or effort actually devoted to each. Employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation, pension plan costs, and the like, whether treated as indirect costs or as direct costs, shall be distributed to particular awards and other activities in a manner consistent with the pattern of benefits accruing to the individuals or group of employees whose salaries and wages are chargeable. Overtime expenses, other than those meeting FLSA requirements, are **not** eligible as benefits costs.

Career Fire Department: A fire department that has an all-paid force of firefighting personnel other than paid-on-call firefighters (fire departments that provide reimbursement on a paid-on-call basis are considered to be a combination fire department for the purposes of this program).

Combination Fire Department: A fire department that has paid firefighting personnel and volunteer firefighting personnel. At a minimum, a combination fire department must have at least one active firefighter that receives financial compensation for services (including paid-on-call) and/or at least one active firefighter that does not receive financial compensation for services, other than life, health, and workers' compensation insurance.

Emergency Medical Services Organization: A public or private organization that provides direct emergency medical services, including medical transport.

Fire Department: An agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a state, territory, local government, or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area. Fire departments may be comprised of members who are volunteer, career, or a combination of volunteer and career.

Firefighter: An individual having the legal authority and responsibility to engage in fire suppression; employed by a fire department of a municipality, county, fire district, or state, engaged in the prevention, control, and extinguishing of fires; and/or responding to emergency situations in which life, property, or the environment is at risk. This individual must be trained in fire suppression, but may also be trained in emergency medical care, hazardous materials awareness, rescue techniques, and any other related duties provided by the fire department.

Formal Layoff Notice: Any layoff notice should align with the local rules and regulations that govern civil service employment in the jurisdiction. In order to be reasonable to employees, and to provide employees facing layoff actions a clear understanding of the impending action, any notice of layoff should be in writing and delivered to a specific employee affected by the action. The notice should identify a specific date employment will cease or specific event that would trigger the termination of employment.

The notice should be delivered or otherwise presented directly to the affected employee in advance of the layoff action in accordance with the civil service provisions or union agreement in force in the jurisdiction taking action, e.g., 60 days prior to the effective date of the layoff action. The notice should specify whether the action is permanent or temporary as well as provide the anticipated schedule of layoffs. For the purposes of the SAFER Program, a notice that is not executed within the specified terms will be considered void unless an additional notice is provided within 14 days of the original action date.

Initial Full Alarm Assignment: Personnel, equipment, and resources ordinarily dispatched upon notification of a structural fire.

Majority Career: A department is considered majority career if 50 percent or more of the active firefighting membership is salaried staff.

Majority Volunteer: A department is considered majority volunteer if more than 50 percent of the active firefighting membership is NOT compensated for service other than a nominal stipend and/or insurance.

Mutual-aid: An agreement whereby assisting fire departments are dispatched into another fire department's jurisdiction only when the first-arriving unit on a scene calls for assistance, or when specially requested by dispatch.

Nominal Stipend: A stipend is nominal if it does not exceed 20 percent of what the fire department would otherwise pay to hire a full-time firefighter to perform the services for which the stipend is provided. Whether a stipend falls above or below the 20 percent threshold may be determined in one of two ways. Departments that maintain paid full time firefighters on their payrolls may compare the stipend to the salary they pay a full time firefighter who performs similar services to determine whether the stipend is more or less than 20 percent of that salary. Departments that do not maintain full time firefighters on their payrolls may make the determination based on a comparison to the salary paid to a full time firefighter in a neighboring jurisdiction, elsewhere in the state, or ultimately the nation, and may also utilize data from the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. A nominal stipend may also include reimbursements to volunteer firefighters for approximate out-of-pocket expenses they incur.

If a stipend paid exceeds 20 percent of the prevailing wage calculated as described above, then the firefighter receiving compensation would not qualify as a volunteer and is considered an employee who may be covered by the FLSA minimum wage and overtime provisions.

Operational Budget: The budget supporting fire-related programs and/or emergency response activities (salaries, maintenance, equipment, apparatus, etc.).

Paid-on-Call: Firefighters who are paid a stipend for each event to which they respond. Paid-on-call firefighters may be considered paid firefighters or volunteer firefighters, depending on whether the stipend they receive is a nominal stipend. A department whose membership is comprised of all volunteer firefighters, including any paid-on-call firefighters who receive only a nominal stipend, will be considered a volunteer fire department for purposes of this safer program. A department whose membership is comprised of any paid-on-call firefighters who receive more than a nominal stipend will be considered a combination fire department, for the purposes of this SAFER Program. *Also refer to the definition of a **nominal stipend**.*

Part-time Firefighter: A firefighter who works less than 40 hours per week. When more than one part-time firefighter shares a position that results in work in excess of 40 hours per week, FEMA considers that shared assignment to be a full-time equivalent (FTE) position that must be accounted for in the staffing information provided in the application.

State: Any of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

National, State, Local, or Tribal Organizations that Represent the Interests of Volunteer Firefighters: Organizations that support, or represent the interests of, firefighters in front of legislative bodies at the local, state, tribal, and federal level. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, state or local firefighter and/or fire chiefs' associations, volunteer firefighter relief organizations, and associations. FEMA shall make the final determination as to whether an applicant is an appropriate volunteer firefighter interest group.

Staffing and Deployment: The minimum staffing requirements to ensure a sufficient number of members are available to operate safely and effectively as defined in NFPA 1710 and 1720.

Volunteer Fire Department: A fire department that has an all-volunteer force of firefighting personnel. For a fire department to have an all-volunteer force, no member may receive financial compensation (in the form of salary or wages) for their services other than life and health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and/or a nominal stipend per call. FEMA considers a department to be majority volunteer if more than 50 percent of its membership is made up of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for services.

Appendix B

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Part I - AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. Grantee Responsibilities

SAFER Award recipients (grantees) must agree to the following:

1. Perform all tasks (scope of work) as outlined in the grantee's application approved by FEMA within the period of performance, and comply with all special conditions in accordance with the articles of agreement. Grantees that do not fulfill their obligations under their SAFER Grant will be considered in default and may be required to return the federal funds disbursed under the grant award.
2. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters Category who layoff any firefighters during the two-year period of performance will be considered in default of their grant and the award will be terminated. Grantees may be required to return the federal funds disbursed under the grant award.
3. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters Category must agree to maintain the SAFER Funded Positions as well as the number of positions declared at the time of award throughout the two year period of performance unless the grantee has been afforded a waiver of this requirement. For additional details on attrition of firefighters during the period of performance and waivers of staffing maintenance requirements, see *Appendix A. Additional Overview Information*.
4. Retain grant files and supporting documentation for three years after receipt of the official notification that the grant has been closed. FEMA may require access to any pertinent books, documents, papers, or records belonging to a grant recipient. The DHS Office of Inspector General or the Comptroller General of the United States may also require access to a grantee's books and records.

The required documentation for federally funded purchases should include specifications, solicitations, competitive quotes or proposals, basis for selection decisions, purchase orders or contracts, invoices, and cancelled checks. Grantees who fail to document purchases may find their expenditures will be questioned and disallowed.

5. Provide periodic performance reports to FEMA. In all years of the grant's period of performance, for both the Hiring of Firefighters and the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters categories, grantees must submit quarterly performance reports as well as a final performance report at grant closeout. Payments are requested on-line using the automated system and payments are based on actual expenses incurred during the period covered by the payment request. Quarterly performance reporting is required if the grantee has not requested funding within the quarter.

At the end of the grant's period of performance, all grantees are required to produce a final report on how the grant funding was used and the benefits realized from the award. Grantees must submit a final financial report and a final performance report (i.e., closeout report) within 90 days after the end of the period of performance. After these reports have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, grantees are given an official notice that the closeout has been accepted and completed. Any remaining grant funds are de-obligated. The grantee is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down but remain unspent.

6. Administer the grant in accordance with the administrative rules for federal grants and cooperative agreements, specifically those found in 44 CFR Part 13.
7. Follow the audit requirements of OMB Circular A-133, Audits of states, local governments, and nonprofit organizations, which call for grantees who expend \$500,000 or more in federal funds in a year (from all federal sources) to have a single audit performed in accordance with the Circular. (For more information about the Circulars, go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>)
8. Notwithstanding any provision of other laws, firefighters hired under these grants shall not be discriminated against, or be prohibited from, engaging in volunteer firefighting activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours.
9. Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 requires that, beginning October 1, 2005, all recipients of federal preparedness funds (including recipients of federal grants and contracts) adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a condition for the receipt of the federal funds.

Recipients of FY 2013 SAFER Grants will be considered to be in compliance with the NIMS requirement if the grantee:

- (a) Has an operational knowledge of the Incident Command System (ICS)
- (b) Has an understanding of NIMS' principles and policies
- (c) Agrees to adopt and/or comply with all directives, ordinances, rules, orders, edicts, etc., passed down by the local or state authorities with respect to incident management.

Responders who have already been trained in ICS do not need retraining if their previous training is consistent with DHS standards. In order for us to document compliance, grantees will be required to certify their compliance with the NIMS/ICS requirements as part of their grant closeout process. Grantees may contact their State Emergency Preparedness Officer or State Fire Marshal for local NIMS compliance requirements.

10. To the extent possible, grantees should seek, recruit, and appoint women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups to increase their ranks within the applicant's department (see eligibility requirements).
11. FEMA strongly encourages applicants, to the extent practicable, to seek, recruit, and hire military veterans to increase their ranks within their departments. In FY 2013, all SAFER Applicants who have a policy in place addressing their intent to implement strategies to recruit military veterans will receive additional consideration.

12. Grantees may use their own procurement procedures, which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided the procurements conform with the requirements of 44 C.F.R. § 13.36(b) – (i) and other applicable federal laws and standards.

Grantees who fail to adhere to their own procurement policy, or otherwise fail to fully comply with the federal laws and standards regarding purchases involving federal funds may be subject to questioning and subsequently disallowed costs.

13. Specifications shall clearly show all requirements the bidder will fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated. However, those specifications may not be so narrowly constructed or contain features that limit, restrict, or eliminate competition unnecessarily.

Grantees may, when developing solicitations, list factors that will be used in their evaluation of proposals as long as those evaluation factors are not found to limit competition. Finally, grantees cannot impose in-state or local geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals.

Applicants and grantees are encouraged to obtain product information from vendors in order to be more informed about the items they plan to purchase. However, grantees may not use specifications obtained from vendors for any solicitation with federal grant funds if the specifications would be found to be restrictive. It is the grantee's responsibility to assure vendor specifications are not used in a manner that would result in restricting or limiting competition.

Additionally, if a vendor or manufacturer drafts, writes, edits, critiques, or provides any direct consultation on a grant application, that vendor or manufacturer cannot submit a bid for that purchase. Likewise, if a vendor or manufacturer drafts, writes, edits, or critiques a specification to be used for the solicitation for the purchase of a specific product, that vendor or manufacturer cannot submit a bid for that purchase. See *Conflicts of Interest* below.

Grantees shall, on request, make available pre-award review and procurement documents such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, and independent cost estimates if 1) the purchase specifies a brand name product, or 2) the proposed grant is to be awarded to someone other than the apparent low bidder under a sealed bid process.

Grantees found to be using proprietary, or otherwise limiting specifications, may find their expenditures questioned and subsequently disallowed.

14. In order to ensure objective vendor performance and eliminate a real or apparent unfair competitive advantage, anyone who develops or drafts specifications, requirements, statements of work (including the grant application), invitations for bids, and/or requests for proposals shall be excluded from competing for such procurements.

Additionally, no employee, officer, or agent of the grantee shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a procurement supported by federal funds if a real or an apparent conflict of interest would be involved.

A conflict of interest could arise when any of the following conditions exists:

- (a) An officer, employee, or agent of the grantee has a financial or other interest in the vendor selected for the procurement

- (b) Any member of the grantee's officers', employees', or agents' immediate family has a financial or other interest in the vendor selected for the procurement
- (c) An organization that employs a grantee's officer, employee, or agent is a vendor or has a financial or other interest in the vendor selected for the procurement.

For the purposes of this program, DHS considers volunteers of an organization and grant writers to be employees, officers, and/or agents of the grantee. No volunteer or member of an organization or anyone involved in the application for funding can participate in, or benefit from, the procurement if federal funds are involved.

Grantees that purchase items with grant funds from vendors who employ any of their volunteers/members will have to document how they avoided a conflict of interest during the procurement process (i.e., specific details regarding how the members/volunteers removed themselves, or how they were prevented from participating in the process).

Grantees who fail to document fully their purchases may find that their expenditures will be questioned and subsequently disallowed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The recipient must, in addition to the assurances made as part of the application, (DHS Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions available within Section 6.1.1, please see: <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/cfo-financial-management-policy-manual.pdf>) comply with all applicable statutes, regulations, executive orders, OMB Circulars, terms and conditions of the award, and the approved application. Section 6.1 – CFO Authority for Financial Assistance and Oversight

1. Section 6.1 – CFO Authority for Financial Assistance and Oversight

1.1 Part 6.1.1 – Financial Assistance Award Standard Terms and Conditions

DHS requires standard terms and conditions approved by the Division of Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight (FAPO) to be applied to all financial assistance awards.

For the complete listing of DHS Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions, please refer to: Appendix A. Standard Terms and Conditions

1.2 – Audit Requirements

Improper Payments Information Act (IPIA) of 2002

(Public Law 107-300)

Enacted to ensure the correct use of federal funds and to avoid improper or erroneous payments.

1.3 – Duplication of Benefits

- There may not be a duplication of any federal assistance by governmental entities, per 2 CFR Part 225, Basic Guidelines Section C.3 (c), which states: Any cost allocable to a particular federal award or cost objective under the principles provided for in this Authority may not be charged to other federal awards to overcome fund deficiencies, to avoid restrictions imposed by law or terms of the federal awards, or for other reasons. However, this prohibition would not preclude governmental units from shifting costs that are allowable under two or more awards in accordance with existing program agreements. Non-governmental entities are also subject to this prohibition per 2 CFR Parts 220 and 230 and 48 CFR 31.2.

2. **Payment.** DHS/FEMA uses the Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer (DD/EFT) method of payment to recipients. To enroll in the DD/EFT, the recipient must complete a Standard Form 1199A, Direct Deposit Form, found by cutting and pasting the following link into your web browser: <http://www.fms.treas.gov/eft/1199a.pdf>.

FEMA utilizes the Assistance to Firefighters e-Grants System for the full lifecycle of the grant. Please use the following link to access the system <https://portal.fema.gov/famsVuWeb/home>.

2.1 – Payment

- In accordance with Treasury regulations at 31 CFR Part 205, the recipient shall maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and the disbursement of said funds (See 44 CFR Part 13.21(i)) regarding payment of interest earned on advances. In order to request an advance, the recipient must maintain or demonstrate the willingness and ability to maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from DHS and expenditure and disbursement by the recipient. When these requirements are not met, the recipient will be required to be on a reimbursement for costs incurred method.
- **NOTE:** Funds will not be automatically transferred upon issuance of the grant. Grantees must submit a request for advance/reimbursement (sf-270) in order for the funds to be transferred to the grantee's account.

3. Certifications and Assurances

Certifications and assurances regarding the following apply:

- **Debarment and Suspension.** – Executive Orders 12549 and 12689 provide protection from fraud, waste, and abuse by debarring or suspending those persons that deal in an irresponsible manner with the Federal Government. The recipient must certify that they are not debarred or suspended from receiving federal assistance. For additional information, see 2 CFR Part 3000.
- **Federal Debt Status.** – The recipient may not be delinquent in the repayment of any federal debt. Examples of relevant debt include delinquent payroll or other taxes, audit disallowances, and benefit overpayments. (See OMB Circular A-129) (Refer to SF-424, item number 17.)

4. Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Compliance

As a federal agency, FEMA is required to consider the effects of its actions on the environment and/or historic properties to ensure that all activities and programs funded by the agency, including grants-funded projects, comply with Federal Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) regulations, laws and Executive Orders as applicable. Grantees and sub-grantees proposing projects that have the potential to impact the natural or man-made environment, including but not limited to construction of communication towers, modification or renovation of existing buildings, structures and facilities, or new construction including replacement of facilities, must participate in the FEMA EHP review process. The EHP review process involves the submission of a detailed project description that explains the goals and objectives of the proposed project along with supporting documentation so that FEMA may determine whether the proposed project has the potential to impact environmental resources and/or historic properties. In some cases, FEMA is also required to consult with other regulatory agencies and the public in order to complete the review process. The EHP review process must be completed before funds are released to carry out the proposed project.

5. Equipment Marking

Awardees may consider marking equipment in the manner of "purchased with funds provided by the US Department of Homeland Security" to facilitate their own audit processes, as well as federal audits and monitoring visits, which may result from receiving federal funding. Equipment maintenance requirements are outlined in 44 CFR Part 13.32.

C. Draw Down and Expenditure of Funds

Grantees should not expend funds or request a draw down until all special conditions listed on the grant award document have been met and the award is approved for payment in the e-Grants system. Grant recipients should draw down funds based upon immediate disbursement requirements; however, FEMA strongly encourages recipients to draw down funds as close to disbursement or expenditure as possible to avoid accruing interest.

Although advance drawdown requests are permissible, grantees remain subject to the interest requirements of the Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) and its implementing regulations at 31 CFR Part 205. Interest under CMIA will accrue from the time federal funds are credited to a grantee's account until the time the grantee pays out the funds for program purposes.

D. Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements must be met throughout the life of the grant (refer to the Funding Opportunity Announcement and the special conditions found in the award package for a full explanation of these requirements).

Any reports or documents prepared as a result of this grant shall be in compliance with federal "plain English" policies, directives, etc.

- 1. Federal Financial Report (FFR) – required semi-annually.** Recipients of any SAFER Grants awarded on or after October 1, 2009, are required to submit a semi-annual Federal Financial Report (FFR, SF-425). The FFR is to be submitted using the on-line e-Grant system and will be due semi-annually based on the calendar year beginning with the period after the award is made. Grant recipients will be required to submit an FFR throughout the entire period of performance of the grant.

Reporting periods and due dates:

- January 1-June 30; due July 30
- July 1-December 31; due January 30

- 2. Financial and Compliance Audit Report.** Recipients that expend \$500,000 or more of federal funds during their fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with GAO's Government Auditing Standards, located at <http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm>, and *OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*, located at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default. Audit reports are currently due to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse no later than nine months after the end of the recipient's fiscal year.

In addition, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Comptroller General of the United States shall have access to any books, documents, and records of recipients of FY 2013 assistance for audit and examination purposes, provided that, in the opinion of the Secretary or the Comptroller, these documents are related to the receipt or use of such assistance. The grantee will also give the sponsoring agency or the Comptroller, through any authorized representative, access to, and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the grant.

The state shall require that sub-grantees comply with the audit requirements set forth in *OMB Circular A-133*. Recipients are responsible for ensuring that sub-recipient audit reports are received and for resolving any audit findings.

- 3. Monitoring.** Grant recipients will be monitored periodically by FEMA staff, both programmatically and financially, to ensure the project goals, objectives, performance requirements, timelines, milestone completion, budgets, and other related program criteria are being met.

Monitoring will be accomplished through a combination of desk-based reviews and on-site monitoring visits. Monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial, programmatic, performance, and administrative issues relative to each program and will identify areas where technical assistance and other support may be needed.

The recipient is responsible for monitoring award activities, to include sub-awards, to provide reasonable assurance that the federal award is administered in compliance with requirements. Responsibilities include the accounting of receipts and expenditures, cash management, maintaining of adequate financial records, and refunding expenditures disallowed by audits.

- 4. Grant Closeout Process.** Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, grantees must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments throughout the

period of performance. After these reports have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, a closeout notice will be completed to close out the grant.

The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds that will be de-obligated, and address the requirement of maintaining the grant records for three years from the date of the final FFR. The grantee is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down but remain as unspent on grantee financial records.

5. Required Performance and Financial Reports for Grant Closeout

- Final Performance Report Narrative (within the Closeout module in e-Grants) is due 90 days after the end of the period of performance
- Final SF-425 is due 90 days after the end of the grant period

Required submissions

- (1)** Final SF-425 is due 90 days from end of grant period
- (2)** Final progress report is due 90 days from the end of the grant period

Part II - FEMA CONTACTS

This section describes several resources that may help applicants in completing a FEMA grant application.

1. Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID)

CSID is a non-emergency comprehensive management and information resource developed by DHS for grant stakeholders. CSID provides general information on all FEMA grant programs and maintains a comprehensive database containing key personnel contact information for federal, state, local and tribal organizations. CSID can be reached by phone at (800) 368-6498 or by e-mail at ASKCSID@dhs.gov, Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:30 p.m. (EST).

2. Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)

FEMA GPD's Grants Management Division will provide pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance to the grant programs included in this solicitation. Additional guidance and information can be obtained by contacting the FEMA Call Center at (866) 927-5646 or by e-mail to ASK-GMD@dhs.gov.

3. FEMA Regions

FEMA Regions will provide support, including pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance, to the grant programs included in this solicitation. For a list of contacts, please go to <http://www.fema.gov/about/contact/regions.shtm>.

4. SAFER Program Help Desk

Please contact the SAFER Program Help Desk with your questions or comments by calling (866) 274-0960 or by e-mail at firegrants@dhs.gov. Additional guidance and information can be obtained by visiting the AFG Web site at <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants/>.

Part III - OTHER INFORMATION

A. Excess Funds

Due to successful competitive bid processes, some grantees have funds remaining after the completion of their obligations outlined above.

SAFER Grantees with excess funds

Hiring of Firefighters Category Grantees

Grantees that complete the approved scope of work and still have grant funds available may request to use the remaining funds provided that the grantee has met all grant requirements during the initial period of performance and the use of the funds is consistent with the original scope of work. This shall be done through the amendment request process.

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category Grantees

Grantees that have completed the approved scope of work in this activity and still have grant funds available may use the excess funds to continue with recruitment or retention activities provided they are consistent with the original scope of work and conducted within the originally approved period of performance. This shall be done through the amendment request process.

B. Turndown Procedure

The SAFER Grants are competitive. Not all applications will be successful, but all applicants will receive a decision letter from FEMA that briefly describes the shortcomings and weaknesses of the application. These aspects are articulated by the technical evaluation process. Due to the historical number of turndowns for these grants, detailed debriefs for all applicants will not be possible.